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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 20 August 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Regrettably, the cycle of violence has resumed and death and destruction are once again being meted out by Israel, the occupying Power, against the defenceless Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip.

As indicated in my letter to you of 12 August 2014, even throughout the entire period of the temporary humanitarian ceasefire and during the course of negotiations in Cairo for a permanent ceasefire agreement, Israel has never abided by the ceasefire, persisting with flying its warplanes above the Gaza Strip and with attacks by land and sea and now resuming its military airstrikes (A/ES-10/649-S/2014/585).

Over the past 24 hours, the Israeli occupying forces have carried out more than 60 military airstrikes against densely populated civilian areas in Gaza, killing at least 24 Palestinians, including children and women, and injuring more than 110 people. Among those murdered by Israel in this onslaught were six members of Al-Dalou family, including Mustafa Rabah Al-Dalou (age 14), his mother, Wafaa Hussein Al-Dalou, and Ahmad Rabah Al-Dalou (age 20), when Israeli warplanes struck their home in the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood of Gaza City. Also killed in that strike were Widad Al-Deif (age 27) and her seven-month-old baby, Ali. The occupying forces also bombed the home of the Allouh family, killing eight of its members, including children, women and men, and injuring dozens of others. The dead included Mohammed Allouh and his two brothers, Raafat and Ahmed, as well as the wife of Raafat and their four young children. Also killed in Israeli airstrikes were a two-year-old girl, Nour Mohammed Abu Hasira, in the Al-Zeitoun neighbourhood east of Gaza City, and Mohammed Ahmed Al-Abeet (age 16) and Sahir Al-Abeet (age 11), near Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza. The intensity of the Israeli missile strikes and bombings has again flattened homes, and more civilians are feared dead as rescue personnel continue attempts to recover bodies trapped under the rubble.

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The facts are that Israel has not for a moment ceased any of its illegal, destructive actions, continuing to inflict losses and suffering on the Palestinian people throughout the occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, with military raids and attacks, home demolitions, arrests and detentions, and settler terror and provocations continuing unabated during this entire period. The situation in Gaza, in particular, has remained precarious, as the barbaric Israeli military aggression and blockade have created a catastrophic humanitarian situation.

As of today, more than 2,040 Palestinians in Gaza have been brutally and deliberately killed by the Israeli occupying forces, including at least 470 children, and more than 10,300 people have been injured, many of them critically wounded and facing imminent death. Of the injured, at least 3,000 are children, of whom an estimated 1,000 will suffer from a lifelong disability. This is just one of the many indications that human suffering and trauma continue long after hostilities end and the world's attention has turned away, and that, for many, that suffering tragically continues forever.

Additionally, more than a quarter of Gaza's population remains displaced, with over 390,000 Palestinians continuing to shelter in schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and with host families, and more than 100,000 people have been rendered homeless by the complete destruction of, or severe damage caused to, their homes by the occupying Power. Moreover, with vital infrastructure shattered, electricity and clean water remain scarce, hospitals remain overwhelmed, and infections and disease are spreading among the population. As all are by now aware, the humanitarian needs in this regard are staggering, and yet urgent recovery continues to be delayed in the absence of a permanent ceasefire and Israel's blatant intransigence and insistence on collectively punishing the 1.8 million Palestinians in Gaza in a grave breach of international humanitarian law, including the obligation to protect the civilian population, and in gross violation of their human rights, tantamount to war crimes and crimes against humanity by the occupying Power.

We condemn all of these flagrant Israeli violations and call on the international community, including the Security Council, to demand an immediate halt to the Israeli military aggression against the Palestinian civilian population suffering under its occupation. There is an international consensus that there is no military solution to this crisis, or to the conflict as a whole for that matter, and stopping the violence now is imperative for saving innocent civilian lives, too many of which have already been lost, and promoting an environment of calm in which to conclude a permanent ceasefire agreement that halts the hostilities and seriously addresses the root causes of this crisis, including the prolonged, illegal Israeli blockade of Gaza and all of the humanitarian, socioeconomic, political and security consequences in this regard.

We thus once again urge the international community to act forthwith to demand a permanent, comprehensive ceasefire and to support the efforts being exerted in Cairo towards that objective. Continued Israeli intransigence and brinksmanship in the negotiations must not be tolerated, allowing the situation to further destabilize and spiral out of control. The duty of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security must be upheld. In this regard, the draft resolution before the Council, in document S/2014/568 of 4 August 2014, represents a sound basis for serious action to be taken and we urge the Council members to undertake this responsibility without delay.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 516 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 12 August 2014 (A/ES-10/649-S/2014/585), constitute a basic record of the crimes that have been committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations